

2.0 THE GLOBAL YOUTH TOBACCO SURVEY- BACKGROUND.

UNF Project

The Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI)/WHO has recently been awarded by the United Nations Foundation for International partnership (UNFPI) what is probably the largest single tobacco prevention grant to initiate a joint project with UNICEF titled, "Building alliances and taking action to create a generation of tobacco free children and youth". The aim of the project is to pull together the evidence, technical support, and strategic alliances necessary to positively address the negative impact of tobacco and to encourage and support children and adolescents in leading healthy and active lives free of tobacco. The project will be focused in a small group of developing countries, one per WHO region, and will draw upon the combined technical expertise and operational resources of number of UN agencies – in particular WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank. The agencies will work together with the global scientific community, governments and non-government agencies, institutions and systems within countries, the media, and with young people to show that together they can make difference in this important public health issue.

The project is conceived as a dynamic and interactive process, where by the activities and products of each phase will be used to inform and guide subsequent activities. The project will consist of three distinct, but overlapping phases. The first phase will focus on **harnessing the evidence for action:** synthesizing the existing evidence from countries, some of which may participate in subsequent phases. ; Undertaking new areas of research to support actions; and establishing the research-based evidence for developing future actions.

The second phase will be the **activating phase.** Country Activating Groups (CAGs), with broad membership, will be formed in each of the participating countries as the coordinating and implementing mechanism at the county level to select and develop the components of a comprehensive country-based approach to addressing tobacco use among children and young people. Opportunities to promote the exchange of experiences and issues between countries and global activities will be developed and strengthened.

The third phase will involve **taking the project to scale:** producing and disseminating resources; strengthening regional capacity to sustain activities; integrating the products and results of the project into ongoing tobacco control work at the national, regional and global levels; transferring technology and experience between countries and regions; and strengthening cooperation and collaboration at all levels.

The GYTS

The GYTS is a school-based tobacco specific survey which focuses on adolescents age 13 – 15 (grades 8-10). It assesses student's attitudes; knowledge and behaviors related to tobacco use and ETS exposure, as well as youth exposure to prevention, curriculum in school, community programmes, media messages aimed at preventing and reducing youth tobacco use. The GYTS provides information on where tobacco products are obtained and

used and information related to the effectiveness of enforcement measures. School surveys are considered useful tools in gathering data as they are relatively inexpensive and easy to administer, tend to report reliable results, and refusals are significantly lower than in household surveys. The most common research approach for this specific population has been the self administered questionnaire. Therefore, all the above, reasonably justifies why a school-based survey has proved to be most appropriate, hence for the UN project on Youth and Tobacco

3.0 Objectives of GYTS

As it was mentioned earlier the GYTS is a school-based tobacco specific survey

The GYTS is a school-based tobacco specific survey that focuses on students' age 13-15 years. The objective of this survey is two fold;

1. To document and monitor prevalence of tobacco use including cigarette smoking, and current use of smokeless tobacco, cigars or pipes.
2. To better understand and assess students' attitudes, knowledge and behaviors related to tobacco use and its health impact, including; cessation, environmental tobacco smoke (RTS), media and advertising, minors access and school curriculum.

The GYTS is attempting to address the following issues

- determine the level of tobacco use
- estimate age of initiation of cigarette use
- estimate the level of susceptibility to become cigarette smokers
- exposure to tobacco advertising
- identify key intervening variables, such as attitudes and beliefs on behavioral norms with regard to tobacco use among young people which can be used in prevention programmes
- assess the extent to which major prevention programmes are reaching school-based populations and establish the subjective opinions of those populations regarding such interventions.

Contents of GYTS included the following aspects

- Smoking status of youth.
- Age of initiation of cigarette use.
- Number of cigarettes smoke in lifetime.
- Frequency of smoking.
- Likelihood of smoking.
- Knowledge and attitudes towards smoking.
- Knowledge and attitudes towards cessation.
- Exposure o environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) – amount/duration.
- Access to cigarettes.
- Exposure to media and advertising.
- School curriculum.